

3.2.8 SOCIOECONOMICS

Socioeconomic characteristics described for Hanford include employment, regional economy, population, housing, community services, and local transportation. Statistics for employment and regional economy are presented for the REA that encompasses nine counties surrounding Hanford in Washington (Table L.1-1). Statistics for population, housing, community services, and local transportation are presented for the ROI, a three-county area in which 90.8 percent of all Hanford employees reside: Benton County (78.8 percent), Franklin County (8.9 percent), and Yakima County (3.1 percent) (Table L.1-2). In 1996, Hanford employed approximately 14,586 persons (approximately 4 percent of the total employment in the REA).

Regional Economy Characteristics. Selected employment and regional economy statistics for the Hanford REA are summarized in Figure 3.2.8-1. Between 1980 and 1990, the civilian labor force in the REA increased 10.3 percent to 254,777. The 1994 unemployment rate in the REA was 9.1 percent, significantly higher than the rate of 6.4 percent in Washington. In 1993, the REA per capita income of \$18,501 was 15 percent lower than Washington's per capita income of \$21,839.

Employment patterns in the REA parallel those in Washington, with manufacturing, retail trade, and services providing the majority of jobs. The service sector accounts for the highest percentage of employment in both the REA and Washington, 26.3 percent and 27.4 percent, respectively.

Population and Housing. Population and housing trends in the ROI are summarized in Figure 3.2.8-2. The ROI population, which totalled 379,693 in 1994, increased 19.8 percent during the period 1980 to 1994, much lower than the 29.3-percent increase in Washington. Population growth rates among the three counties composing the ROI, range from 18.1 percent in Benton County to 21.9 percent Franklin County.

Between 1980 and 1990, the number of housing units in the ROI increased by about 5 percent, compared to the 20-percent increase in Washington. However, homeowner and renter vacancy rates in 1990 were about the same in both the Hanford ROI and Washington, approximately 1 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

Community Services. Community services described for the Hanford ROI are education, public safety, and health care. Figure 3.2.8-3 presents school district characteristics for the Hanford ROI, and Figure 3.2.8-4 presents public safety and health care characteristics.

Education. Twenty-five school districts provide public education in the Hanford ROI. As shown in Figure 3.2.8-3, school districts were operating at capacities ranging from 63 percent to 125 percent in 1994. The student-to-teacher ratios in the ROI ranged from a low of 5.9:1 in the Kahlotus district to a high of 21.5:1 in the Kiona-Benton district. The average student-to-teacher ratio in the ROI was 18.9:1.

Public Safety. Fifteen city and county law enforcement agencies provide police protection in the ROI. In 1994 the highest sworn officer-to-population ratio in the ROI was 1.85 sworn officers per 1,000 persons in the city of Pasco. The ROI average officer-to-population ratio was 1.6 officers per 1,000 persons. Figure 3.2.8-4 displays the ratio of sworn police officers to population for the Hanford ROI counties and cities.

Thirty-seven fire departments provide fire protection services for the Hanford ROI. The principal municipal fire departments include both professional and volunteer staff. In 1995, the greatest staffing strength relative to population was in Franklin County, with 7.7 firefighters per 1,000 persons (Figure 3.2.8-4). The ROI average firefighter-to-population ratio was 4.0 firefighters per 1,000 persons.

Health Care. Eight hospitals serve the three-county region, with the majority operating well below capacity. In 1994, a total of 465 physicians served the ROI. Figure 3.2.8-4 shows that the average physician-to-population ratio in the ROI was 1.2 physicians per 1,000 persons, and the hospital bed-to-population ratio ranged from 2.0 beds per 1,000 persons in Benton County to 2.3 beds per 1,000 persons in Franklin and Yakima Counties.

Local Transportation. Interstate highways and State Routes provide access between Hanford and metropolitan areas (see Figure 2.2.1–1 and Figure 2.2.1–2). The east-west highways, Interstate 90 and Interstate 84, are located north and south of the site, respectively. Interstate 90 is the major link west to Seattle and east to Spokane. Interstate 84 is the major link to Portland, Oregon. Interstate 90 and Interstate 84 are connected by Interstate 82, which is located southwest of Hanford. Interstate 182 is located southeast of the site and provides an east-west corridor linking Interstate 82 to the Tri-Cities (Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco) area.

Vehicular access to Hanford is provided by several highways. State Route 240 is the preferred route from the Tri-Cities area. State Route 240 connects to the Richland bypass highway, which interconnects with Interstate 182. State Route 243 exits the site's northwestern boundary and serves as a primary link between the site and Interstate 90. State Route 24 enters the site from the west and continues eastward across the northernmost portion of the site and intersects State Route 26 approximately 16 km (10 mi) east of the site boundary. State Route 240 traverses the site in the southwestern section.

There are no current road improvement projects that affect access to Hanford. However, two projects currently in the planning stage could affect access to Hanford in the future. These projects are a realignment of State Route 240 from Stevens Drive to State Route 224 and an asphalt overlay of State Route 24 from Taylor Ranch to State Route 241 (WA DOT 1995a:1). The one road segment in the ROI that could be affected by the storage and disposition alternatives is State Route 240 from State Route 24 to State Route 224. In 1995, this road segment operated at level of service B.

The local intercity transit system, Ben Franklin Transit, supplies bus service between the Tri-Cities and Hanford. Both private interests and Ben Franklin Transit provide van pooling opportunities in the ROI.

Onsite rail transport is provided by a short-line railroad owned and operated by DOE. There is a total of 161 km (100 mi) of track. This line connects with the Union Pacific line just south of the Yakima River. The Union Pacific line interchanges with the Washington Central and Burlington Northern and Santa Fe at Kennewick. The rail system is mainly used to deliver coal to various boiler plants at Hanford. The rail system delivers equipment and material to the various facilities when rail shipment is more convenient than truck. There is no passenger rail service at Hanford.

In the ROI, the Columbia River is used as an inland waterway for barge transportation from the Pacific Ocean. The Port of Benton provides a barge slip where shipments arriving at Hanford may be off-loaded (HF County 1996a:1). [Text deleted.]

Tri-Cities Airport located near the city of Pasco provides jet air passenger and cargo service by both national and local carriers. Numerous smaller private airports are located throughout the ROI (DOT 1992a:7-325).